



## Mentoring Hard to Reach Youth

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## Introductions

- Name
- Agency/Mentoring Program
- Role/Position
- Number of years with your program
- Community Based, Site Based or Both

## Session goals

- **Identifying Youth Population:** looking at the youth we are mentoring and what their struggles might be
- **Mentors that Match:** finding good mentors with identified qualities
- **Getting Them Ready:** recruiting quality mentors and training
- **Keeping it Going:** supporting matches

## Who are the youth we serve?

- Youth in foster care
- Youth with incarcerated parents
- Youth with mental health/behavior concerns
- Youth in the Juvenile Justice system
- Youth living in poverty
- Others



## What are the struggles of our youth?

- Lacks Family Support
- Comes from a Single Parent Family
- Lives in poverty
- Socially Awkward
- Lacks attention from adults and family
- Needs exposure to the bigger world around them

## Additional struggles...

- Damaged self-image
- Cognitive difficulties
- Emotional and behavioral problems
- Educational difficulties
- Trauma
- Involvement in "the system"
- Mental health issues
- Poor nutrition
- Low self-esteem
- Depression



## Problems and Issues affecting our youth today

- Peer pressure
- Substance Abuse
- Child and Family Physical Abuse
- The internet (Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, etc)
- Cell phones (texting, videos, pictures)
- Instant Satisfaction



## How to juggle all those stressors?



## Looking for Mentors!

Now that we have our youth population identified, what qualities do we look for in mentors?



## All Mentors should:

- Be good communicators, and especially good listeners
- Be self-aware, particularly of their own biases
- Be committed to personal growth and lifelong learning
- Have a sense of humor and enthusiasm
- Have high standards and expectations of themselves and others
- **CONSISTENTLY** meet their mentee at the agreed upon day, place, and time

## Effective Mentors of High-Risk Youth

- Know how to be firm, direct, and set boundaries
- Can forge an alliance: the child will *know* the mentor is behind him/her
- Encourage self-exploration and the acceptance of responsibility
- Are nurturing and persistent in advocating for the young person

## Mentors of higher-risk youth should also:

- Bring experience with struggling youth
- Have skills for coordinating with other service providers
- Welcome a high-level of screening, increased training, and close supervision
- Expect a high level of support from mentoring program staff

## Get Creative with the Recruitment!

- Gaining work experience
- Getting out of the house
- Testing a new career
- Building self-confidence
- Putting your hobby to good purpose
- Being a winner
- Putting faith into action
- Empowering others
- Being a role model for your children
- Giving back what you have gotten

Once they have expressed interest in mentoring, we should screen for:

- Ability to cope with crisis and ambiguity
- Ability to work in complex systems
- Emotional health and stability
- Stable life situations

\*These situations can be screened for during a thorough interview process.

## New Mentor Training

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Policies/procedures  | • Working with at-risk youth                                   |
| • Communication with youth   | • Location of mentoring  |
| • Boundaries (physical, monetary, personal, working with family, etc.) | • Rules of program site  |
| • Cultural sensitivity   | • Gift giving  |
| • Mandated reporters   | • Improving listening skills                                   |
| • Mental health and physical disabilities                              | • Instilling self-esteem                                       |
| • Confidentiality  | • Everyday stressors of youth (bullying/peer pressure/suicide) |
|  | • Ways to have fun!  |

## Additional training topics for at-risk youth

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • Handling child abuse and neglect situations | • Goal setting  |
| • Setting limits with mentees                 | • Addressing specific academic needs                                |
| • Alcohol and substance abuse issues          | • Diversity and cultural sensitivity                                |
| • Bullying                                    | • Program policy on what to do in a crisis situation                |
| • Teen sexuality and dating                   | • Juvenile Justice Youth (probation, community service hours, etc.) |

## How to build a relationship

- Enjoy young people and like spending time with them
- Believe in the potential of young people
- Commit their time and energy and know that they will follow through on that commitment
- Have high self-esteem and healthy boundaries
- Be patient and persistent people
- Most importantly, have FUN!

## Supporting new matches

- Within the first 2 weeks of initial match
- First few months, every 2 weeks
- For the first year, monthly
- In person, on phone & through email



### Monitoring at-risk matches

What problems might arise in first few months?

- Meetings not taking place
- Don't know what they should be doing with mentee
- Youth is dissatisfied with activities or not part of the process
- Either group unhappy with level of communication

### Additional areas of concern...

- "My mentee is not making any progress"
- Expressed need for help/advice about a situation
- Mentor is overly involved with youth's family
- Skipping/rescheduling meetings
- Not turning in match documents/logs
- Not returning check in phone calls
- Youth moves, gets in trouble with the law or discloses gang/substance abuse issues

### Questions or Comments